

Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

For parents with children 0-4 years old

Did You Know?


- The number of overweight children 2-5 years old in the US has doubled in the last 30 years.
- The number of overweight children 6-11 years old has tripled in the last 30 years.
- In California, 1 out of every 3 children is overweight.
- Overweight children are more likely to have health problems including:
 - Diabetes
 - Asthma
 - High Blood Pressure
 - High Cholesterol
 - Depression




As a parent of a child 0-4 years old, there are key steps you can take to prevent your child from becoming overweight. Helping your child means changing the way YOU and your family eat, exercise and spend time together.


Success begins with YOU, the parent, leading a healthy lifestyle. Your children learn from watching what you do.

Follow these Key Steps:


 **Breastfeed your baby for at least six months without other foods or liquids.**

 **Limit “junk foods” to once in a while and give water instead of juice, soda and other sweet drinks.**

 **Offer small portions of healthy foods and let your child decide how much to eat at each meal.**

 **Increase your child’s daily physical play and physical activity.**

 **Increase YOUR daily physical activity.**

 **Decrease screen time (TV, videos, computer, etc).**

Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Breastfeed your baby for at least 6 months without other foods or liquids

Did You Know?

- Babies who are breastfed have less chance of being overweight as children.
- Breast milk burns calories for moms and shrinks the uterus, so moms get in shape more quickly.
- Breast milk can protect babies from infections – breastfed babies have fewer ear infections and are sick less often.
- Breast milk is easiest for babies to digest – breastfed babies are less likely to have diarrhea or constipation.
- Breast milk is best for baby's brain and overall development.
- Breast milk is free and is always safe with no bottles to prepare or refrigerate.
- Breastfeeding does not cause breast sagging, pregnancy does.
- Breastfeeding helps develop strong mother-child relationships.
- Families who breastfeed save money on food and healthcare costs.

Tips for Parents

- *Breastfeed whenever your baby seems hungry – and stop when baby seems full (turns head away from breast, stops sucking). Babies are born with the ability to know when they are full.*
- *Find a quiet place in your home to breastfeed – if you are able to relax and enjoy this time it will be easier on you and on your baby.*
- *Be patient – it is not always easy – but worth the effort!*
- *Join a breastfeeding support group.*
- *Talk to your baby's doctor or visit www.breastfeeding.org if you have any questions about breastfeeding or to find a support group in your area.*



Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Limit “junk foods” to once in a while and give water instead of juice, soda and other sweet drinks

Did You Know?

- Your child learns from watching you – be a good role model - choose healthy foods and drink water yourself.
- Eating more vegetables and fruits and less junk food is very important for your child's early brain development and intelligence.
- If you offer your small child a mix of vegetables and fruits, he will learn to eat them. If you give your small child sweet or salty foods, he will be less likely to eat the healthy foods.
- Giving your child juice makes her less hungry for healthy foods at mealtime and more likely to choose sweet foods over healthy foods.
- Juice and other sweet drinks can cause cavities and tooth decay, stomach problems, low bone density as well as overweight kids.

Tips for Parents

- *If YOU eat less junk food and drink more water, your child will want to do the same.*
- *If you don't keep junk foods in your house, it will be easier not to eat them.*
- *Always give water instead of juice with meals or snacks and between meals. Your child is more likely to enjoy water if you offer it regularly.*
- *If your child does not like a new vegetable or fruit the first time, try it again later and then again.*
- *Buy and serve a mix of fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned). Let your child help choose them at the store.*



Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Offer small portions of healthy foods and let your child decide how much to eat at each meal

Did You Know?

- Children know **how much** they need to eat. They do not know **what kinds** of food they need to eat. **Parents** should decide what foods to give and when.
- Children are born with the ability to know when they are full. Small children can lose that ability over time when parents encourage them to overeat.
- Small children change their minds about what they like to eat. The foods they like one day may be different the next day – it is important to keep offering healthy foods.
- It may take 10 tries or more before your child will like a healthy food.
- Children who eat more meals together with their family are more likely to eat healthy foods.

Tips for Parents

- *You are the most important role model for your child. Let your child see you eating small portions of healthy foods. Your child will want to eat what you eat.*
- *Start with small portions and let your child ask for more if he is still hungry.*
- *Do not comfort your child by feeding him. Comfort your child by cuddling, walking with or singing to him.*
- *Make a schedule for meals and snacks and try to stick to it each day. Children like this kind of routine and will be less likely to overeat.*
- *Do not praise your child for finishing everything on her plate. Praise your child for trying new vegetables, fruits and other healthy foods.*
- *Turn off the TV during meals and eat together as a family.*



Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Increase your child's daily physical play and physical activity

Did You Know?

- Your baby's brain grows quickly in the first year of life. Learning starts with PLAY!
- Your child needs physical play and activity EVERY DAY from the time he is born.
- Playing with your baby helps her to grow stronger, smarter, healthier and happier.
- Play and physical activity helps your child sleep better at night.
- Active children are less likely to become overweight.
- Toddlers need at least **30 minutes** of structured activity (like practice walking, climbing, stretching) and **one hour** of supervised free play every day.

Tips for Parents

- *You are the most important role model for your child. Let your child see YOU being physically active every day.*
- *Find ways to exercise as a family - take your child for a walk every day.*
- *Schedule time each day to play with your child.*
- *Keep it fun. Think of new play activities that you both can enjoy.*
- *Limit baby's time in swing, stroller, or bouncer seat to less than thirty minutes a day.*
- *Try these activities*

Infants:

Peek-a-boo
Hide-and-peek
Pat-a-cake
Baby massage and stretch

Toddlers:

Dance to music
Follow-the-Leader
Hide-and-peek
Make Believe

Preschoolers:

Freeze Dance
Hopscotch
Jump rope
Hide-and-peek
Leap Frog
Scavenger Hunt



Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Increase YOUR daily physical activity

Did You Know?

- Exercising 30 minutes or more most days of the week will help you to:
 - Burn calories and control your weight
 - Lower your risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease
 - Feel better
- If YOU exercise, your child is more likely to.
- Children whose parents are overweight have an 80% chance of being overweight.

Tips for Success

- Start slowly! If 30 minutes is too much, exercise 3 times per day for 10 minutes, and slowly add time to each session.
- Exercise with a friend or family member.
- Pick an exercise that you like.
- Use a calendar to schedule time for you and for your whole family to exercise together – then track the time you spend being active.
- Make exercise a part of your daily routine.
- Drink lots of water before, during, and after exercising.

How to Exercise

1. Warm up for 5-10 minutes

- If you are walking, start by slowly walking in place.
- Now stretch your muscles. Choose stretches that use the same muscles you will use during your exercise.

2. Exercise

- Pick an exercise that keeps you moving; like walking, running, or swimming.
- You should be able to talk while exercising.
 - If you can sing while you exercise, work a little harder.
 - If you are out of breath, slow down a little.

3. Cool down for 5 minutes

- Slow down little by little.
- Stretch the muscles that you used while exercising. Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds.

Always talk to your doctor before starting to be sure your exercise program is safe for you.



Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Decrease screen time (TV, videos, computer, etc)

Did You Know?

- Children who watch more TV are more likely to become overweight.
- Children with a TV in their bedroom are more likely to become overweight.
- Children learn better by doing and playing – not watching screens.
- 90% of food commercials on Saturday morning kids' TV shows are for junk foods like sugary cereals, candy and fast food.
- Children who watch less TV ask for fewer junk foods and fewer toys (because they don't see so many commercials).
- Children who live in a home where the TV is usually on are less likely to be able to read when they are 4-6 years old.
- Children who watch screens have a harder time relaxing their mind and bodies – and a harder time going to sleep.
- Doctors recommend NO screen time for children less than 2 years old.

Tips for Parents

- *Decrease YOUR screen time; it will be easier for your child to do the same.*
- *Keep track of how much screen time your child has each day. Each day try to decrease screen time and increase physical activity.*
- *Limit total screen time to no more than one hour per day.*
- *Do not put a TV in your child's bedroom.*
- *Turn off the TV during meals.*
- *Plan activities your child can do instead of watching screens.*



Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Increase daily activity & decrease screen time

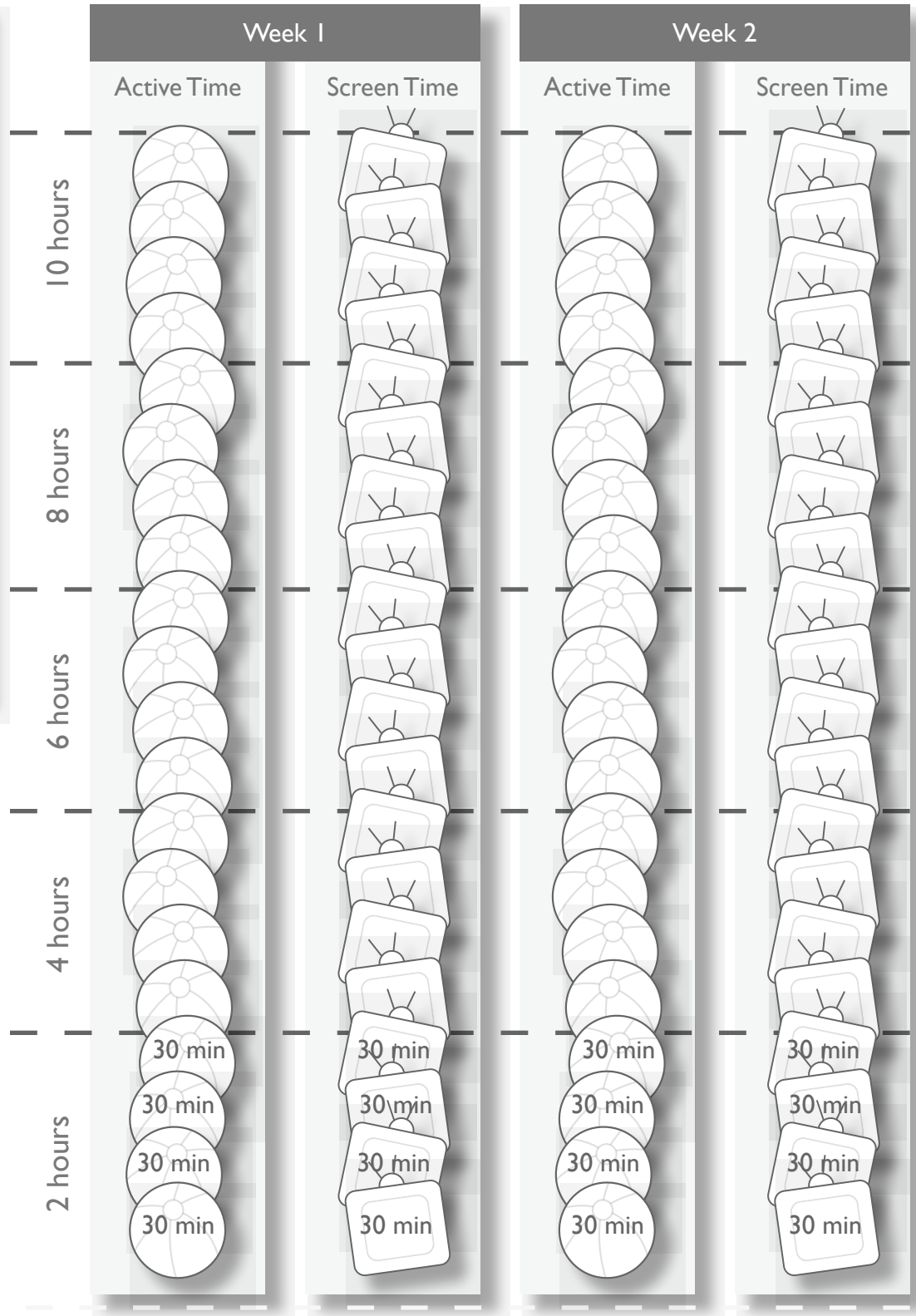
• Activity page for your child •

Tape this page to your refrigerator to track your child's total active playtime and total screen time each day for two weeks.

Color in one "ball" for each half hour you spend playing actively with your child.

Color in one "screen" for each half hour your child spends watching screens (TV, videos, computer etc).

Can you increase your child's playtime and decrease screen time during week 2?



Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Increase daily activity & decrease screen time

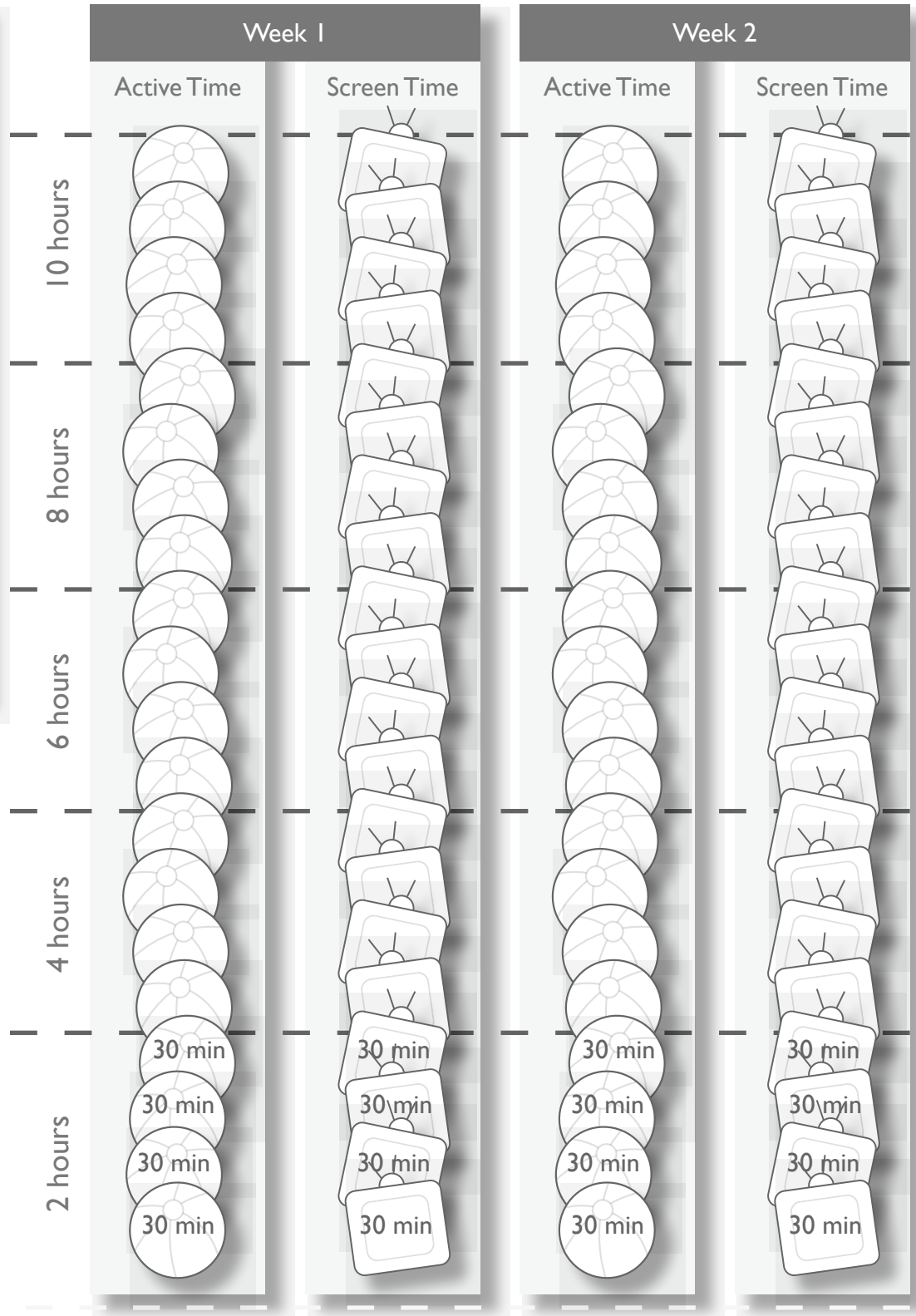
• Activity page for you •

Tape this page to your refrigerator and track the total time you are physically active and your total screen time each day for two weeks.

Color in one “ball” for each half hour you spend exercising.

Color in one “screen” for each half hour you spend watching screens (TV, videos, computer etc).

Can you increase your physical activity and decrease screen time during week 2?



Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Take time each day to PLAY

• Activity Page •

Put a check mark in the box next to the activities that you are willing to try *this week*.

Infants

- Blanket Time**
Place your baby on a blanket on the floor. Place toys nearby and let him reach for them.
- Bubble Burst**
With your baby in a baby seat, blow bubbles within her reach. Show her how to pop the bubbles.
- Stretch & Wiggle**
Help your baby to:
 1. Stretch his arms and legs
 2. Wiggle his toes
 3. Shake the rattle
 4. And pat his nose



Toddlers and Preschoolers

- Cardboard Box**
Find a large cardboard box. Cut windows and doors in the sides. Crawl in and out and play with your child.
- Let's See, I'll Be**
Ask your child to act like
 - A tree blowing in the wind
 - The sun rising
 - A train chugging on a track
 - A cat arching its back
- Body Part Follow the Leader**
Put on your favorite music and move your body together with your child as you:
 - Bend one knee, now the other
 - Nod your head, look high and look low
 - Shake a leg
 - Clap your hands
 - Wave your arms
 - Kick your legs
 - Stomp your feet
- Animal Movements**
Take turns moving like animals:
 - Hop like a frog
 - Crawl on the ground like a caterpillar
 - Fly like a butterfly
- Marching Band**
 - Fill an empty can with beans and shake it
 - Bang on pots with a wood spoon
- Outdoor Helping Activities**
 - Help walk the dog
 - Help wash the car
 - Help garden